

In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A An isolated polynucleotide molecule comprising at least one gene of interest, and at least one selectable marker gene, wherein said at least one selectable marker gene comprises ~~a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:~~
~~(a) a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NOS.: 3, 4 or 5, 3 and 4, or functional fragments thereof; or a complement of said nucleotide sequence; and~~
~~(b) a nucleotide sequence which selectively hybridizes under high stringency stringent conditions to the complement of a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO NOS: 1 or 2, or a plant optimized version thereof, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes for a protein possessing ribitol dehydrogenase enzymatic activity and a protein possessing ribitol kinase enzymatic activity, or a complement thereof.~~
2. (cancelled)
3. (currently amended) Transgenic cells transformed with ~~a gene of interest~~ and the polynucleotide molecule of claim 1, wherein the selectable marker gene gives said cells a selective advantage when a population of cells including the transformed cells and nontransformed cells is supplied with a marker compound.
4. (currently amended) The transgenic cells of claim 3 wherein said marker compound is arabitol, ribitol, or mannitol or a derivative thereof.
5. (currently amended) The transgenic cells of claim 3, wherein said transgenic cells comprise bacteria, fungi, yeast, plant or a combination thereof, and wherein said nucleotide sequence is optimized for expression in said cells.
6. (original) A Plant or plant tissue regenerated from the cells of claim 3.

7. (currently amended) A method of selecting transformed cells from a population of cells comprising

- a) introducing into the genome of a cell a gene of interest and a selectable marker gene;
- b) obtaining transformed cells;
- c) supplying to the population of cells a marker compound wherein said transformed cells have a selective advantage over non-transformed cells due to expression or transcription of the ~~gene of interest~~ or the selectable marker gene in the presence of the marker compound; and
- d) selecting said transformed cells from the population of cells;

wherein said selectable marker gene comprises ~~a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:~~

- (a) ~~a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NOS.: 3, 4, or 5, or functional fragments thereof; or a complement of said nucleotide sequence; and~~
- (b) ~~a nucleotide sequence which selectively hybridizes under high stringency stringent conditions to the complement of a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: NOS: 1 or 2, or a complement thereof; a plant optimized version thereof, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a protein that possesses ribitol dehydrogenase enzymatic activity and a protein that possesses ribitol kinase enzymatic activity;~~

and said marker compound comprises arabitol, ribitol, ~~or mannitol or a derivative thereof.~~

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said cells comprise bacteria, fungi, yeast, plant or a combination thereof, and wherein said nucleotide sequence optimized for expression in said cells.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein said cells comprise plant cells.

10. (original) Transformed cells selected according to the method of claim 7.

11. (original) Transformed plants derived from the cells of claim 10.

12. (original) Seeds produced from the transformed plants of claim 11, wherein said seeds are capable of germinating to produce transformed plants.

13. (currently amended) A An isolated polynucleotide molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NOS.: 3, 4, or 5, or functional fragments thereof; or a complement of said nucleotide sequence; and
- (b) a nucleotide sequence which selectively hybridizes under high stringency conditions to the complement of a plant optimized version of the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO NOS: 1 or 2, and wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes for a protein possessing ribitol dehydrogenase activity and a protein possessing ribitol kinase activity.

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (withdrawn)

17. (withdrawn)

18. (withdrawn)

19. (new) An isolated polynucleotide molecule comprising at least one gene of interest, and at least one selectable marker gene, wherein said at least one selectable marker gene comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NOS.: 3 and 4.

20. (new) An isolated polynucleotide molecule comprising at least one gene of interest, and at least one selectable marker gene, wherein said at least one selectable marker gene comprises a nucleotide sequence which selectively hybridizes under high stringency conditions to the

complement of a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1, or a plant optimized version thereof, wherein said at least one selectable marker gene encodes for a protein possessing arabitol dehydrogenase enzymatic activity.

21. (new) A method of selecting transformed cells from a population of cells comprising
- a) introducing into the genome of a cell a gene of interest and a selectable marker gene;
 - b) obtaining transformed cells;
 - c) supplying to the population of cells a marker compound wherein said transformed cells have a selective advantage over non-transformed cells due to expression or transcription of the selectable marker gene in the presence of the marker compound; and
 - d) selecting said transformed cells from the population of cells;
- wherein said selectable marker gene comprises a nucleotide sequence which selectively hybridizes under high stringency conditions to the complement of a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1, or a plant optimized version thereof, and encodes a protein having arabitol dehydrogenase enzymatic activity;
- and wherein said marker compound is arabitol.

22. (new) A method of selecting transformed cells from a population of cells comprising
- a) introducing into the genome of a cell a gene of interest and a selectable marker gene;
 - b) obtaining transformed cells;
 - c) supplying to the population of cells a marker compound wherein said transformed cells have a selective advantage over non-transformed cells due to expression or transcription of the selectable marker gene in the presence of the marker compound; and
 - d) selecting said transformed cells from the population of cells;
- wherein said selectable marker gene comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NO.: 3, and a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NO.: 4;
- and wherein said marker compound is ribitol.

23. (new) The method of claim 22, wherein said selectable marker gene further comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NO.: 5.

24. (new) The isolated polynucleotide molecule of claim 1, wherein said nucleotide sequence further encodes a protein possessing ribitol transporter activity.